

1. The Buddha Himself Built a Pagoda

Ven. Aññāsi Koṇḍañña's relics were deposited into pagoda by the Buddha Himself.

<i>Koṇḍañña Sutta Commentary in Pāli</i> ¹	Translation in English by monk Sarana
<i>"Punadivase aruṇuggamanavelāyameva citakaṃ nibbāpetvā</i>	Already in the dawn of the next day (the Buddha) asked to extinguish the funeral pyre.
<i>sumanamakuḷavaṇṇānaṃ dhātūnaṃ parisāvanaṃ pūretvā</i>	Filling a water strainer with the relics resembling jasmine buds,
<i>bhagavati nikkhamitvā veḷuvanavihāraḥkoṭṭhakaṃ sampatte āharitvā</i>	When the Exalted One went out [Subcomy says: "from the Perfumed Chamber"], (the relics) were brought (while monks) were gathered at the entrance to the Veḷuvana monastery,
<i>satthu hatthe ṭhapyiṃsu.</i>	(and then the monks) placed (the relics) on the hand of the Master [i.e. the Buddha].
<i>Satthā dhātuparisāvanaṃ gahetvā pathaviyā hatthaṃ pasāresi,</i>	The Master took the water strainer with relics and stretched out (His) hand over the earth.
<i>mahāpathaviṃ bhinditvā rajatabubbuḷasadiṣaṃ cetiyaṃ nikkhami.</i>	The great earth broke and a pagoda like a silver bubble (itself) came out (of the earth).
<i>Satthā sahatthena cetiye dhātuyo nidhesi.</i>	The Master deposited the relics in the pagoda by His own hand.
<i>Ajjāpi kira taṃ cetiyaṃ dharatiyevāti."</i>	The pagoda is to be seen standing even today.

Here the "jasmine buds" appearance of relics is taken by Burmese sayadaws as the benchmark for Aranants' relics today – if they don't resemble "jasmine buds", then they are not particularly acknowledged. (Although large part of the relics of Mogok Sayadaw resemble "jasmine buds" as little as a cow resembles a golden brick..)

"Silver bubble" – this expression occurs again only in commentary to *Apadāna*, where the "Water-Offering Elder" (an Arahant monk) is said to have offered, in a past life, water to the Padumuttara Buddha by both of his hands. The water established itself in the air like a silver bubble.. I don't find any case of "pagoda like a silver bubble" anywhere in the Pāli texts apart from this case of the Arahant Koṇḍañña. As such I also don't understand how the Buddha deposited the relics into the "bubble-pagoda" after it arose.

Pagoda coming itself from earth is a well known kind of pagodas today, so called "*svayambhū*". The most famous one is Swayambu Nath in Nepal's Kathmandu, but we may find a small *svayambhū* pagoda also in Shwedagon – there it is called "Paw Taw Mu" (ပေါ်တော့မူ). This little pagoda arose already gelded, with its pennant-shaped vane at the top, and Buddha-carvings throughout the not-gelded base. The pagoda arose like this several decades ago.²

¹ *Samyutta Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā – Sagāthāvagga – 8. Vaṅgīsaṃyutta - 9. Koṇḍaññasuttavaṇṇanā*

² For more information on wonders of Shwedagon you may read "Nine Wonders around Shwedagon and More" available at <https://archive.org/details/@monksarana> .



Hidden behind bars, Paw Taw Mu pagoda is as high as a human, and of small circumference.



The lower portion of Paw Taw Mu.



Apart from the plastic pendant and the bells, all the rest including the *hti* ("umbrella") and *hngat-mya-nar* ("vane") appeared themselves with the pagoda.

2. Did Ledi Sayadaw Deny Abhidhamma to the Not-Yet-Enlightened Ones?

The Original in Burmese ³	Official English Translation ⁴
ကမ္မဋ္ဌာန်းကိစ္စကို ပဓာနမပြုမူ၍ တရားမြှင့်သမျှကို အကုန်အစင် ဝေဖန်၍ ဟောတော်မူသောနည်းသည် အဘိဓမ္မာနည်းမည်၏။	The Abhidhamma method, however, offers a profound and exhaustive analytical treatment of all aspects of the Dhamma, with no particular reference to the practice for insight development.
ဤအဘိဓမ္မာနည်း မည်သည်ကား မဂ်ဖိုလ်ကို ရပြီးသော အရိယာပုဂ္ဂိုလ်တို့အား ပဋိသန္ဓိဒါဏ် ပွားစီးရန် အကျိုးငှါ ဖြစ်၏။	The latter method [i.e. Abhidhamma method] is actually meant for the Noble Ones for the purpose of sharpening analytical knowledge (<i>paṭisambhidāññāṇa</i>).
တရားအစိတ် အလီများပြားလှသောကြောင့် ပုထုဇဉ်တို့ ကမ္မဋ္ဌာန်းအရာနှင့် သက်ဝင်နိုင်သောနည်း မဟုတ်။	It is not suitable as a method of insight training for the ordinary person because it is too subtle.
။ ဥပမာကား လှေငယ်တက်စင်းနှင့် ကူးသန်းသွားလာ၍ အသက်မွေးသောသူတို့သည် ဖြစ်ပြင်၌သာ ကူးသန်းသွားလာကုန်ရာ၏။	For example, those who have small boats, only ply the river for their livelihood.
မဟာသမုဒ္ဒရာပြင်၌ မသွားကုန်ရာ၊	They should not venture out to the deep ocean.
မဟာသမုဒ္ဒရာကို သွားလာနိုင်လောက်သော လှေကြီးတက်ကြီး သင်္ဘောကြီး ထူထောင်နိုင်သောအခါမှ သမုဒ္ဒရာကို ချင်းနင်းကုန်ရ၏။	Only if they have ocean – going vessels should they make an ocean voyage.

³ "လယ်တီဒီပနီပေါင်းချုပ်", လယ်တီဆရာတော်ဘုရားကြီး, လယ်တီဒီပနီထွန်းကားပြန့်ပွားရေးအဖွဲ့၊ မိခင်ဧရာဝတီစာအုပ်တိုက်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့၊ ၁၃၆၁ (၁၉၉၉); နှာ ၄၀၆-၄၀၇။

⁴ "The Manuals of Buddhism (The Expositions of the Buddha-Dhamma)", Mahā Thera Ledi Sayadaw [translated by Ledi Dīpanī Propagation Society of Myanmar], Mother Ayeyarwaddy Publishing House, Yangon, 2004; p.502.

The explanation of Sayadaw U Vajirapāṇī is that Ledi Sayadaw did encourage Abhidhamma to *puthujjanas* (not-yet-enlightened persons) – but more for study than for practice. This is easily understood especially in case of the yogis who "hate lists" etc. (who are most abundant among the non-Burmese). When the meditation teacher gives meditation instruction, the yogi is expected to understand the instruction at least to such level that he/she can follow it while meditating. If Abhidhamma method was applied, the yogi would not be able to understand how to follow the instruction. Moreover, the teacher would spend long time explaining Abhidhamma philosophy, during which the yogi would either fall asleep or forget everything right when the teacher finished, or even earlier. Some well-behaving yogis would first respectfully listen, and then run away from the meditation center. Therefore, it is better to teach in the most simple and clear way. Ledi Sayadaw suggests that this is the way of *suttas*, but I do not believe him – he himself is employing a great deal of Abhidhamma in most of his meditation instructions.

3. What Makes *Angulimāla Paritta* Powerful?

Was *Angulimāla* enlightened or at least Stream-Enterer (*Sotāpanna*) when he chanted the protective, soothing chant for the lady who was giving birth, saying "since I was born as an *Ariya*?"

Sayadaw U Vajirapāṇī explains that because of his murder before he was monk, later as a monk ven. *Angulimāla* was first unable to meditate, and even attacked by thrown objects when he was on alms-rounds. It was after the chanting for the pregnant lady that he could become an Arahant. The power of this chanting comes from the fact that it was taught by the Buddha, and that ven. *Angulimala* really didn't kill any living being since the time he became "*Ariya*". "*Ariya*" means he became a monk – "အရိယာယ၊ မြတ်သော။ ဇာတိယာ၊ ရဟန်းဇာတ်ဖြင့်။"⁵

In *Visuddhimagga* - 16. *Indriyasaccaniddeso* - *Dukkhaniddesakathā* - *Jātiniddeso* : "*Akkhitto anupakuṭṭho jātivādenā*"^{ti} (*dī. ni. 1.331*) *ettha kule. "Yato haṃ, bhagini, ariyāya jātiyā jāto"*^{ti} (*ma. ni. 2.351*) *ettha ariyasīle*. – the Burmese translation explains that here "*Ariya*" means he was established in the *catupārisuddhi sīla*:⁶ "ဤပါဠိ၌ အရိယာ အဖြစ်ကို ပြတတ်သော "စတုပါရိ သုဒ္ဓိသီလ" ၌ လာ၏။"⁷ This is perhaps based on the Commentarial explanation, e.g. in *Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā* – *Sīlakkhandhavagga-Aṭṭhakathā* – 4. *Soṇadaṇḍasuttavaṇṇanā* – *Buddhaguṇakathā* : "*Catupārisuddhisīlena sīlavā, taṃ pana sīlaṃ ariyaṃ uttamaṃ parisuddhaṃ*." = "Ethical in the four-fold purification ethics/morality, that is however ethics noble, ultimate, pure."

The idea that a *puthujjana* may be endowed with *ariyasīla* can be substantiated by the *Vessantara Jātaka* (*Jātaka no.547*) v.1686, where the king speaks about his son (the *Bodhisatta*) as one endowed with *ariyasīla*. This however cannot be *catupārisuddhi sīla* which pertains only to monks (i.e. no way for *Bodhisatta* to follow *pātimokkhasaṃvara sīla* without *pātimokkha* being established by a Buddha) - "*Na cāhaṃ tasmimṃ dubbheyyaṃ, ariyasīlavato hi so; Asilokopi me assa, pāpañca pasave bahuṃ; Kathaṃ vessantaraṃ puttaṃ, satthena ghāṭayāmaṃ*".

⁵ မဇ္ဈိမပုဂ္ဂိုလ်(သာသနာရေး) ဘာသာဦးကာ နာ ၂၈၁

⁶ *pātimokkhasaṃvara sīla, indriyasaṃvara sīla, ājīvaṃpārisuddhi sīla, and paccayasannissita sīla*, these four are first mentioned in *Milindapañhā* – 4. *Anumānavaggo* – *Anumānapañhā*

⁷ "ဝိသုဒ္ဓိမဂ္ဂအဋ္ဌကထာ မြန်မာပြန် ဒုတိယတွဲ" ကျိုက်ထိုမြို့ ဘုရားသုံးဆူတောင် အရှင်နန္ဒမာလာ၊ ၂၀၁၂, p.466

4. *Tipiṭakadhara* Examination – not so difficult

Did the 13 *Tipiṭakadharas* of Myanmar memorize the *Majjhima*, *Saṃyutta*, *Aṅguttara*, and *Khuddaka Nikāyas*? – No, the Myanmar *tipiṭakadhara* examination consists only of 20 books of the Myanmar *Tipiṭaka* edition which is complete in 40 books. The examination consists of complete *Vinaya Piṭaka* (5 books), complete *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* (12 books), and complete *Dīgha Nikāya* (3 books) – the other portions of *Sutta Piṭaka*, namely *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, and *Khuddaka Nikāya* are not included in the examination.

Some of the Myanmar *Tipiṭakadharas* memorize them, but so far only Mingun Sayadaw, the first *Tipiṭakadhara* who was the "answerer" (*vissajjaka*) at the 6th Buddhist Council, is known to have memorized also the other *nikāyas*. From my personal findings it however seems that Mingun Sayadaw didn't memorize certain scriptures of *Khuddaka Nikāya* which seem to be later added as a form of Commentary, or not historically accepted as part of the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* by all Buddhist countries - namely *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, *Peṭakopadesa*, *Milindapañhā*, etc.

5. Kathiwine Meditation Technique - in brief

Information comes from "ကျေးဇူးတော်ရှင် ဆရာတော်ကြီးများ၏ ဝိပဿနာရှုနည်းများ ပေါင်းချုပ် ပထမအုပ်" by ကျော်နန္ဒအောင်, published by စိတ်ကူးချိုချိုအနုပညာ, ရန်ကုန်မြို့, 2011; p.102-119.

Kathiwine meditation technique was first taught by the Kathiwine Sayadaw (Ashin Revata) (1903-1965). Kathiwine Sayadaw was born in Abya-Alay-Su Village in Bago Region of Myanmar. Kathiwine Sayadaw became a novice taking as his preceptor Sayadaw U Kalyana in the age of 12 and as a novice dedicated his time to the monastic education. In the age of 20 ordained as a monk taking as his preceptor Maran Cho Sayadaw of Kyaik Tho Town. He earned certain government degrees in monastic education (until pathama alat-tan) and then stayed as a teacher of the novices in the monastery of his first teacher U Kalyana. During the World War Two his teachers passed away and Kathiwine Sayadaw for whole year meditated, both during day and during night. Sayadaw started to teach meditation at the age of 44, and since he stayed in the Kathiwine Monastery (in Bago) at that time, he was called Kathiwine Sayadaw.

My understanding of the technique, from the description, is that the yogis meditate throughout the day, from the time they wake up until they fall asleep, dedicating most of the time to the sitting posture. Mindfulness of the elements in the body, especially element of air (movement) and element of fire (head and cold) are watched throughout the body, first with the basis of natural breath – keeping one's hand on the chest to help watching the movement – and later all over the body. At a certain point the yogi will start to observe more mind than the body (thus completing all four *satipaṭṭhānas*). Mindfulness is to be kept all the time, not only when sitting, but also in all other activities including eating, taking shower, etc. The yogi should observe not only the appearing and vanishing phenomena, but also the "knowing" (observing) as it ceases with the disappearance of the "known" (observed) object.

- "Samādhi is important."
- Whatever arises, that should be noted, perishing and coming more.
- There are five things to watch in whole body (i.e. in all parts of the body) - hot, cold, movement, unpleasant, pleasant (ပူတာ၊ အေးတာ၊ လှုပ်တာ၊ ဆင်းရဲတာ၊ ချမ်းသာတာ).
- Of the five three can arise simultaneously (in combination): hot/cold, movement, unpleasant/pleasant. Hot and cold, unpleasant and pleasant – these cannot arise at the same time.
- Other occurrences, such as "numbness", "biting", "pain" are watched as *vedanānupassanā*. Mental occurrences such as happiness are also to be watched.
- Whatever is watched should be watched together with the understanding of the impermanence of the phenomena - and the end of watching of that particular phenomenon (i.e. when the phenomenon disappear the observation of it also ceases) should be also known.
- The intention is to see phenomena arising and passing, but that skill comes after long time of practice.
- If the yogi is not able to watch phenomena just as they arise (i.e. without any basic object such as *ānāpāna*), the sayadaw suggests watching the breath and there the movement of the body. It is also suggested that the yogi places his/her hand on the breast and watches the movement of the hand and of the breast, and also of the skin, flesh - but as "movement" only, not as the concepts of "hand", "breast", "skin", or "flesh".
- It is necessary to sit without movement, making strong determination in the beginning as to the time of the sitting - one hour, half of an hour, etc. This will work if the *Adhiṭṭhāna Pāramī* is well developed.
- All four postures of meditation are suggested, but the main is sitting - any comfortable posture is alright including full lotus posture, but the yogi should be able to stay there whole one hour without any movement. If he/she has pain during that time, the pain should be noted, and (if the pain is serious) the yogi can mindfully change the sitting posture.
- The sayadaw mainly quotes from *Visuddhimagga*, esp. when teaching Dhamma (e.g. explanations of *aniccā dukkha anattā*) and explaining particular aspects of meditation (although the five objects watching are not described this way in *Visuddhimagga*).
- I would like to confess that I am not aware of a Pāli text that would directly mention watching these five objects together in every meditation. I also don't see any Pāli reference to this idea within the pages that describe this technique.

May all beings be happy,

monk Sarana